

Questions and Answers

Why is physical fitness important?

Physical fitness has been shown to help children handle stress and control weight; build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints; increase self-esteem and the capacity for learning; and strengthen peer relationships.

When is the PFT given?

The PFT is administered annually to all students in grades five, seven, and nine during the months of February, March, April, or May.

What is done to assist students with disabilities on the PFT?

Certain variations or accommodations may be provided for students with disabilities who need special assistance on the PFT. Variations or accommodations should be specified in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments* provides a list of the types of variations and accommodations that are available for the PFT. This matrix is posted on the Internet at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

How can parents and guardians best prepare their children for the test?

To help children prepare for the test, parents and guardians can be positive role models and encourage family physical activities. See the Family Fitness Tips in this brochure for more details.

When can parents and guardians expect to receive their children's PFT results?

Students who participate in the PFT will be provided with their individual results upon completing the PFT. Some school districts may require that each student's PFT results be sent to parents and guardians.

How do school districts and schools use the PFT results?

The PFT results are designed to be used in several ways. Schools can use the results to determine the fitness levels of their students and provide direction for physical education programs. Students also can be encouraged to use the results to develop a fitness program of maintenance or improvement. Parents and guardians can use the results to help their children plan fitness activities that meet their individual needs. School districts and schools should also use the results to monitor the fitness status of students in grades five, seven, and nine.

For additional information regarding the California PFT or *FITNESSGRAM*® visit
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/pfl> and
<http://www.cooperinst.org/lftgmain.asp>

Cover photo reprinted, by permission, from Human Kinetics, *FITNESSGRAM/ACTIVITYGRAM*® Test Administration Manual, 3rd ed. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics). This manual includes a DVD with video of all test protocols.



CALIFORNIA Physical Fitness Test (PFT)



**Parent and Guardian Guide to the PFT
and Family Fitness**

Background

California *Education Code* Section 60800 requires each school district in California to administer a physical fitness test annually to all students in grades five, seven, and nine. The State Board of Education designated the *FITNESSGRAM*® as the required Physical Fitness Test (PFT) to be administered to California students.

Goal of *FITNESSGRAM*®

The primary goal of the *FITNESSGRAM*® is to help students establish physical activity as part of their daily lives. *FITNESSGRAM*® provides a number of options for each fitness area so that all students, including students with disabilities, have the maximum opportunity to participate in these tests.

FITNESSGRAM® tests the following six fitness areas. Most of these areas have several options. The options are as follows:

Aerobic Capacity

- PACER (Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run)
- One-Mile Run
- Walk Test (only for ages thirteen or older)

Body Composition

- Skinfold Measurement
- Body Mass Index

Abdominal Strength & Endurance

- Curl-Up

Trunk Extensor Strength & Flexibility

- Trunk Lift

Upper Body Strength & Endurance

- Push-Up
- Pull-Up
- Modified Pull-Up
- Flexed-Arm Hang

Flexibility

- Back-Saver Sit and Reach
- Shoulder Stretch

Performance Standards

The PFT uses criterion-referenced performance standards to evaluate fitness performance. Two levels of performance have been established for each test option: (1) in the Healthy Fitness Zone and (2) needs improvement (not in the Healthy Fitness Zone). The desired performance standard for each test option is the Healthy Fitness Zone. The standard represents a level of fitness that offers some degree of protection against diseases resulting from physical inactivity. The *FITNESSGRAM*® standards have been established according to gender and age. The standards can be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/pfl/>.

2003-04 PFT Results

The PFT results are reported for individual students and for each major sub-group of students (i.e., grade, gender, and ethnicity). Data are reported by the percentage of students who are in the Healthy Fitness Zone and those who are not in the Healthy Fitness Zone. The percentage of students who were in the Healthy Fitness Zone across grades five, seven, and nine in 2004 were: Aerobic Capacity: 50-59 percent; Trunk Extensor Strength: 83-89 percent; Body Composition: 67-68 percent; Upper Body Strength: 67-68 percent; Abdominal Strength: 81-84 percent; and Flexibility: 66-72 percent.

The goal of the PFT is for students to attain the Healthy Fitness Zone for all six of the fitness areas tested. In 2004, 25 percent of students in grade five, 20 percent of students in grade seven, and 26 percent of students in grade nine met the Healthy Fitness Zone for all six fitness areas tested.

Family Fitness Tips

There is no question that exercise is good and that people can benefit from physical activity early on. There are many things you can do to help your child become more active.

- Be a positive role model by exercising regularly on your own or with your child.
- Encourage and support your child's participation in a variety of physical activities.
- Participate together in family fitness activities, such as bicycling, jogging, walking, roller-skating, swimming, dancing, hiking, and/or cross-country skiing.
- Become familiar with resources in your community for promoting physical activity and fitness.

For additional information on how to help your child become more active, visit the following Web sites:

- <http://www.shapeup.org/publications/99.tips.for.family.fitness.fun/>
- <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=825>
- <http://www.fitfamilyfitkids.com/>
- http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/fitness/
- <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/templatecfm>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/PhysicalActivity/brochures/index.htm>